

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 LAB-04 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01 /093 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1748

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 3262

DEPARTMENT PASS OTHER APPROPRIATE LATIN AMERICAN POSTS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB ICFTU XZ DA

SUBJ: NORDIC INITIATIVE IN THE ICFTU FOR A RESTRUCTURING OF ORIT

TO EXCLUDE THE AFL-CIO

REF: A) MEXICO 9195

B) COPENHAGEN 0997

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C) COPENHAGEN 2032

SUMMARY: DANISH TRADE UNION FEDERATION (LO) SOURCE CONFIRMED THAT THE NORDIC LO'S REMAIN UNITED BEHIND PRESIDENT THOMAS NIELSEN'S PROPOSAL AT MEXICO CITY THAT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) ASSIST LATIN AMERICAN TRADE UNION CENTERS EITHER TO RE-STRUCTURE THE INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL WORKERS ORGANIZATION (ORIT) OR TO FORM A NEW REGIONAL ORGANIZATION IN ORDER TO EXCLUDE THE AFL-CIO. ALTHOUGH NO OPTIMISTIC THAT THE LATIN AMERICANS WILL SO ACT, THE NORDICS INTEND TO CONTINUE TO PRESS THE ICFTU LEADERSHIP ON THIS ISSUE LOOKING TOWARD THE EXTRAORDINARY ORIT CONGRESS IN MAY. END SUMMARY.

1) HIGHLY RELIABLE SOURCE IN THE DANISH LO GAVE LABATT RUNDOWN OF THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OCTOBER 15 IN MEXICO CITY AT WHICH CONFRONTATION BETWEEN NORDIC AND LATIN AMERICAN MEMBERS OCCURRED OVER THE FUTURE OF ORIT (REF A). ACCORDING TO THIS ACCOUNT, THE PROPOSAL MADE AT THIS MEETING BY NIELSEN - THAT ORIT SHOULD BE REORGANIZED OR A NEW REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE ICFTU BE FORMED IN ORDER TO FREE THE LATIN AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENTS FROM AFL-CIO DOMINATION - WAS A COORDINATED INITIATIVE AGREED UPON IN ADVANCE BY ALL THE NORDIC TRADE UNION CENTERS. HE IMPLIED, IN FACT, THAT THE SWEDISH LO HAD PLAYED A LARGE ROLE IN THE NORDIC INITIATIVE, MENTIONING THAT RUNE MOLIN OF THE SWEDISH LO) HAD FIRST RAISED THE PROPOSAL AFTER VISITING SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES LAST YEAR. MOREOVER, THE LO SOURCE ADDED, POINTEDLY: "ARNE GEIJER, OF COURSE, WAS PRESENT IN MEXICO CITY" (COMMENT: THIS MAY HAVE BEEN MERELY AN ATTEMPT TO BLAME THE SWEDES, AS A MEANS OF SETTling OLD SCORES. RETIRED SWEDISH LO CHAIRMAN GEIJER, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN GEORGE MEANY'S EUROPEAN BETE NOIRE SINCE THE MID-60'S WHEN GEIJER WAS ICFTU PRESIDENT, AND HIS PRESENCE IN MEXICO CITY WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE OLD SKILLFUL HAND IS STILL PULLING STRINGS.)

2) THE LO SOURCE, WHO ACCOMPANIED NIELSEN TO MEXICO, ADMITTED THAT NIELSEN HAD BEEN SURPRISED AT THE VEHEMENT CONFIDENTIAL

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REACTION OF SOME OF THE LATIN AMERICAN REPS. HE INTIMATED THAT NIELSEN HAD BEEN MISLED BY THE REPORT OF THE ICFTU DELEGATION THT VISITED SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES IN MARCH INTO EXPECTING A GREATER DEGREE OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE IDEA AMONG THE LATIN AMERICANS. THAT DELEGATION, HE COMMENTED, HAD BELEIVED WHAT THE LATIN AMERICANS TOLD THEM AND, CONSEQUENTLY, NIELSEN HAD BEEN CAUGHT A BIT TOO FAR OUT ON THE LIMB.

3) NEVERTHELESS, THE NORDICS ARE NOT ABOUT TO ABANDON THEIR INITIATIVE, THE LO SOURCE SAID. THEY HAVE RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT THE EXTRAORDINARY ORIT CONGRESS IN MAY WILL BE HELD "ACCORDING TO THE RULES", E.G., WITHOUT US PARTICIPATION, AND THEY HAVE BEEN INVITED TO SEND AN OBSERVER DELEGATION TO INSURE THAT THIS PLEDGE IS FULFILLED. THEY ARE, HOWEVER, NO LONGER SANGUINE ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS. THEY HAVE LITTLE REAL CONFIDENCE IN ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN AND THEY INTEND TO KEEP PRESSING HIM TO ENCOURAGE THE LATIN AMERICANS TO RESTRUCTURE ORIT SO AS TO MINIMIZE U.S. INFLUENCE.

4) ALTHOUGH NIELSEN'S THREAT OF NORDIC DIS-AFFILIATION FROM THE ICFTU IF THIS DOES NOT OCCUR IS PROBABLY OVERDRAWN, THE NORDICS ARE APPARENTLY DETRMINED TO WITHHOLD CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SOLIDARITY FUND IN SUCH CASE. NOREOVER, THOMAS NIELSEN, IN HIS POSITION AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ICFTU'S NEW FINANCIAL COMMITTEE, WILL BE ABLE TO EXERT CONSIDERABLE LEVERAGE ON KERSTEN.

5) IF THE ICFTU LEADERSHIP DOESN'T FOLLOW THROUGH, THAT IS, DOESN'T PRESS THE LATIN AMERICANS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEIR AFL-CIO TIES OR THEIR ICFTU CONNECTIONS, THE LO SOURCE THOUGHT THE ICFTU WOULD HAVE INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES WITH ITS AFFILIATED EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CENTERS.
DEAN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED LATIN AMERICAN POSTS.

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